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Stephanie Schulz

W: [Evan Challenger](#) (7-4) L: McDowell, M (4-3)

Game Recap: Baseball | 5/25/2016 3:16:00 PM

Eagles Open Sun Belt Championships with 13-4 Win over Little Rock

GS advances to Thursday's third game against South Alabama or UT Arlington

SAN MARCOS, Texas – Georgia Southern opened the 2016 Sun Belt Tournament in style with a 13-4 win over No. 3 seed Little Rock. The sixth seeded Eagles tallied 15 hits including four players with a three-hit day. [Evan Challenger](#) went seven innings and scattered six hits while [Connor Simmons](#) struck out five of the final six outs in his two innings of work.

For the first time in a decade, Georgia Southern was not struck out in the game. It was the first time the Eagles went without a K since May 20, 2006 in the regular season finale at Wofford. With the win, Georgia Southern improves to 34-23 on the year while Little Rock falls to 23-24 in 2016.

QUOTABLES

Head Coach [Rodney Hennon](#)

"It was a good start for our team today in day one. Offensively we did some really good things, top to bottom in our lineup. We had a lot of different guys contribute. [Evan Challenger](#) was not real sharp early, but I thought he gave us a gutty effort and settled in. He got better as the game went on and he gave us some length to let us save our bullpen a little bit. Overall it was a good start."

CRUCIAL MOMENTS

TOP 2nd – The Eagles opened the second with a single, double and a walk to load the bases. Ground outs by CJ Brazil and [CJ Ballard](#) put the Eagles up 2-0. Two more unearned runs scored on a fielding error by the third baseman and a [Logan Baldwin](#) single through the right side.

BOTTOM 2nd – Little Rock answered immediately by putting two runners on. A single and a sacrifice fly plated two runs to cut the Eagle lead in half, 4-2.

BOTTOM 3rd – The Trojans got the lead down to one with a sacrifice fly to right.

TOP 4th – Baldwin tallied his second RBI of the game with a single to center which sent Ballard home. [Ryan Cleveland](#) was able to beat out a potential double play which let [Evan McDonald's](#) run count.

TOP 5th – [Hunter Thomas](#) kicked the game into high gear with a solo home run off the scoreboard in right. A [Kent Rollins](#) double and a McDonald single to right scored three more runs and blew the game open at 10-3

TOP 6th – Thomas laced a double to center on the first pitch, plating [Jordan Wren](#) from first to make it 11-3

BOTTOM 6th – With the possibility of the run rule coming into effect (10 run lead after seven complete innings), Little Rock clawed another run back in the sixth lofting a sacrifice fly to center.

TOP 8th – Georgia Southern tacked on two more runs in the eighth inning with [Jordan Wren's](#) 2-RBI single to left made it 13-4.

NOTES

- The win was Georgia Southern's first ever win the Sun Belt Baseball Championships. Last year the Eagles went 0-2 to end the 2015 campaign.
- Seven of the nine Eagle batters tallied hits while every batter either scored a run or drove in a run. [Evan McDonald](#), [Logan Baldwin](#), [Jordan Wren](#) and [Hunter Thomas](#) each had three-hit days. Baldwin, Wren, Thomas and [Kent Rollins](#) had two RBIs in the game.
- [Hunter Thomas](#) carried the torch with a 3-for-5 game, two runs scored and two RBIs. His hits all went for extra bases with two doubles and his fifth home run of the year.

UP NEXT

The Eagles advance in the winner's bracket and will take on either South Alabama or UT Arlington in the second round. First pitch is set for approximately 5 p.m. (ET)/4 p.m. (CT). The game can be seen live on ESPN3.

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